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BANBURY United midfielder Ollie Stanbridge celebrates with fans after helping his team win promotion to the Evo-Stik Southern League Premier Division on Monday. More than 1,200 fans crammed into the Spencer Stadium to watch their side beat Taunton Town 2-0 in the Division 1 South and West play-off final. **SEE PAGE 12**

'I'LL ACT FAST TO FIX OUR SCHOOL'

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

THE new headteacher of a Banbury primary school rated "inadequate" by Ofsted last year says she will "rapidly" address any issues.

Julie Hiddleston took over as executive headteacher of William Morris Primary School earlier this month, following the school's conversion into an academy.

It follows an Ofsted report last year that found major problems at the Bretch Hill school including bullying, poor quality of teaching, behaviour and a lack of progress.

The school was told by the education watchdog in 2013 that it required improvement, but two years on was deemed to be failing.

On taking over, Ms Hiddleston said: "Settling in has certainly been a whirlwind and I can't believe I've already done three weeks."

"It's been lovely getting to know all the children and parents and there is a very strong sense of community."

"In terms of priorities it has primarily been for myself and the deputy to establish ourselves in our new roles."

Inspectors from the education watchdog visited the school in May last year. They said pupils had a poor understanding of what constitutes bullying,



Julie Hiddleston, head of William Morris Primary School

and there was a sharp decline in pupil achievement by the end of key stage two.

The new headteacher said: "William Morris is embarking on a new journey of excellence."

"The job of any headteacher, whether it is an outstanding school or not, is to know your school very well."

"I plan to assess as rapidly as possible any core issues, particularly issues mentioned in the last Ofsted report. As a school team we will swiftly identify and address issues to rapidly raise standards in all areas and across all year groups."

The school was officially reopened as an academy on February 1, and is operated by the GLF Academy Trust.

The trust controls 15 other schools across the county including the Longford Park school in Bodicote, which is

set to open in September. When it opens Ms Hiddleston will also become headteacher of the school.

Until last year she was deputy headteacher at Ladygrove Primary School in Didcot.

She added: "I am very much looking forward to working at Longford Park too, it will be a welcome asset for the local community."

William Morris - which has about 175 pupils - was run by Julie Hawkins of Hardwick School and Dawn Shilston from Orchard Fields Primary School until after the Easter holidays.

Educational academies are funded by the government rather than local authorities, and are run by an academy trust that employs the staff.

But they still have to follow the same rules on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions.



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Campaigners in protest at 'greedy' developers

COUNTRYSIDE campaigners from across Oxfordshire united to protest against "greedy" developers building on rural and green belt sites.

Members of a number of different campaign groups staged a protest organised by the Rural Oxfordshire Action Rally (ROAR) outside Woodstock Town Hall on Saturday.

Nearly 100 people bearing banners and placards listened to speeches about the dangers of planned developments on green belt sites across the county.

The rally was attended by representatives from groups including Need Not Greed Oxon, Woodstock Action Group, Save Gavray Meadows in Bicester, the Kidlington Development Watch, the Campaign to Save Adderbury, the North Abingdon Local Planning Group and the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Oxfordshire.

Need Not Greed Oxon is a coalition of nearly 30 campaign groups opposed to inappropriate developments across the county.

ROAR chairman Peter Jay urged people to unite to oppose building on greenbelt sites and the "development free for all" threatening to "destroy" town and village communities.

The Woodstock councillor and TV journalist and former British ambassador to the USA, added: "I address you as friends and neighbours, as fellow victims of greedy developers and cynical landlords."



The protesters outside Woodstock Town Hall

"We are not alone. By uniting against this threat we will be much stronger."

Mr Jay said the building of new houses was being justified by the housing shortage, but insisted the new homes proposed in his town were not the homes people needed.

He added: "What this free for all offers is the wrong houses in the wrong places for the wrong people at the wrong prices."

"What we need is the right homes in the right places for the right people and prices which those who need can afford."

It was the third rally organised by ROAR, after two events in Witney and Wantage.

ROAR organiser Lewis Owen said the executive houses proposed across the region would not meet the social or economic need of people.

The speakers stressed they were not opposing the building of new homes, but building expensive three, four or five-bedroom houses when one or two-bedroom affordable homes were needed.

Son's appeal to find his biological mum

43-year-old put up for adoption but believes his mother is still alive

Hannah Somerville
hsomerville@nqo.com

MORE than four decades after he was first given up for adoption, a Banbury man is on a mission to track down his mother who may still be in Oxfordshire.

Robert Sprittlehouse, 43, was born at the John Radcliffe Hospital on December 18, 1972 and was adopted by a local couple six months later.

Now armed with both the traces of a family history and a single photograph, the Bretch Hill resident is keen to finally get the "closure" he has been missing up until now.

He said: "I was eight or nine when I found out I was adopted. We just sat down and had a chat. It didn't matter to me at all, and it never has done."

"The desire to find biological parents is to get closure and complete the family. It's curiosity really."

So far a trawl through adoption records has revealed that Mr Sprittlehouse's bio-



Robert Sprittlehouse is looking for his biological mother, Carol Wilson McKay, who used to live in Carterton, pictured on the computer monitor behind him

logical mother was called Carol Wilson McKay.

In 1972 she was living in Sellwood Drive, Carterton, and working as a clerk for a garden merchant.

Meanwhile his father, staff sergeant Robert George Bartlett, was born in Florida and had been stationed at USAF Upper Heyford at the time of Mr Sprittlehouse's birth.

He added: "From what I have tried to research I be-

lieve that they may have got married in 1974, but I am not totally sure of this."

"I know my father died in 1995 but as far as I know my mother is still alive."

In the past few weeks Mr Sprittlehouse appealed on Facebook with what little he knew and was contacted by a long-lost cousin in America.

The cousin also provided Mr Sprittlehouse with a photograph of his parents,

which may help jog the memories of people who may know where Carol is.

He said: "To see that for the first time was emotional. I have never had a picture of my mother or father, or what they used to look like. I can see similarities."

■ Do you have any information on former Carterton resident Carol Wilson McKay, or a Carol Bartlett? Email hsomerville@nqo.com.



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Lucy cuts it as a life-saver with her Big Buzz mission

Schoolgirl has half her hair lopped off to help a fellow pupil who has leukaemia

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD girl chose to cut half her hair off to raise money for a children's cancer charity after a boy at her school was diagnosed with leukaemia.

Nearly 100 pupils from Wroxton C of E Primary School watched Lucy

Blackburn, from Banbury, have her hair cut on Friday to raise money for CLIC Sargent.

The charity, which looks after young people with cancer and their families, is running its Big Buzz campaign, which encourages people to cut their hair to support young cancer patients, who often lose their hair during treatment.

Lucy chose to go through with the cut after a boy at her school was diagnosed with leukaemia.

The hair will go to the Little Princess Trust, which makes wigs for children who have lost their own hair through cancer.

Lucy said: "Mummy told me about the trust that

makes wigs for children and I thought it would be good to donate mine, but first I had to grow it."

Her mum Catherine said: "We are so very proud of Lucy for taking on the challenge as soon as she learnt donating her hair was an option. She has shown great enthusiasm for it, and she liked her new haircut as well."

"It is such a horrible illness and the school has done a lot of work to fundraise."

"Raising money for CLIC Sargent at the same time means she can help more than one child. Lucy had to grow her hair since September to reach the required length of 17 inches."



'Callous' nurse who tried to kill her mum banned from profession

A NURSE who tried to murder her elderly mother by poisoning her with a lethal dose of insulin has been banned from the profession.

Julia Knight, previously of Sycamore Drive, Banbury, has been struck off by the Nursing and Midwifery Council register for her "callous and calculated" act.

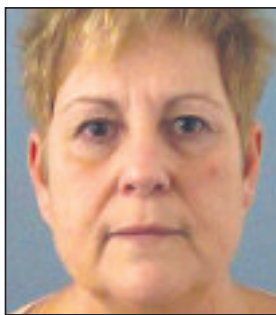
She is currently serving a 14-year jail term for attempting to murder 81-year-old Irene Robson while she was recovering from a fall at the Horton General Hospital.

At a hearing last Friday, case presenter Bo Kay Fung told the council Knight had not shown any "remorse or remediation" and failed to engage with the council.

The council said it was concerned Knight, who did not attend the hearing and was not represented but had been invited, could put the public at risk by reoffending.

In a report of the hearing, it said: "Her actions were a serious breach of trust both as a daughter and a registered nurse."

"Having attempted to murder her mother, and in the absence of any remediation or insight, the panel could not confidently exclude the risk of repetition in



Julia Knight

the future. It considered that she has not shown that she recognises the impact of her behaviour on the public confidence in the profession.

"A striking-off order is the only sanction sufficient to protect the public and to maintain proper standards of conduct."

Ms Fung told the council Knight attempted to murder her "vulnerable" non-diabetic mother using her "clinical knowledge to carefully plan her course of action". She added: "Ms Knight repeatedly lied to police while

being interviewed and denied responsibility during her criminal trial. Her actions involved theft, forgery and deceit."

During her trial at Oxford Crown Court last November, jurors heard Knight forged a prescription for insulin at Banbury's West Bar GP surgery where she worked.

The mother-of-one then went to Ms Robson's bedside at the Laburnum Ward and injected her in the stomach with the drug used to treat diabetes.

Ms Robson suffered a hypoglycaemic attack but doctors managed to save her life with high doses of glucose.

Knight claimed she injected her mother because she wanted her to have a "medical blip" so she would get better care but a jury of five women and seven men unanimously convicted her after more than 14 hours of deliberating.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council ruled Knight cannot apply to be reinstated to the register for five years with an 18-month interim suspension order which will lapse if she does not lodge an appeal within 28 days.

Plans for festival

DEDDINGTON: Plans for the Deddington Festival, which runs from June 16-29, have been announced.

On the first day there will be a guided walk along the Clifton River Valley to learn more about different habitats and how farming techniques are used to protect them.

On June 17 the church of St Peter and St Paul will be holding a jazz concert from 7pm. For details visit deddington-festival.org.uk.

Party for Queen

BANBURY: The Queen's 90th birthday will be the theme for the Banbury Old Town Spring Party on Saturday, May 7.

The annual celebrations will include music, dancing, workshops as well as the usual array of traders from the old town. The town centre will be open for the party between 9.30am and 3.30pm.

Vicar takes over

BANBURY: The congregation at St Mary's Church will have a new vicar this week after the Reverend Phillip Cochrane took over.

Mr Cochrane was previously leader of the Caerleon and Llanfrechfa Group Ministry in Wales.

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Patient feedback

OXON: Health leaders are looking for mystery shoppers to tell them about their experiences at the county's hospitals.

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) is working with the Patient Association to gather feedback from people who have had recent contact with health services.

People who have been inpatients or outpatients at the John Radcliffe, the Churchill, The Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre or Horton General Hospital recently are being urged to report back about their care. OCCG leaders said quick feedback from patients would allow it to take quicker action to improve services.

To information sheet and mystery shopper questions email Jane Brooks at the Patients Association jane.brooks@patients-association.com

Nursery burgled

BLOXHAM: Raiders smashed their way into a nursery and stole cash and damaged a printer.

Police said the burglars smashed a window to get inside the Rainbow Village Nursery in Church Street and stole cash from a tin and damaged a printer.

The overnight burglary was carried out between 5pm on Wednesday and 7am the next day.

The force is appealing for witnesses who saw the raid or anything suspicious to call them on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Players to meet

DEDDINGTON: The Deddington Players will be holding their annual meeting next Thursday, May 12.

It will be at the Holly Tree Club in the village starting at 7.30pm.

To find out about joining email suzieupson@mac.com.

Class cancelled

BANBURY: Spiceball Leisure Centre has cancelled its baby bounce class this Friday due to the local elections.

The session, which usually runs from 10am until midday, will return as normal next week.

The centre will be used on Friday to host the counts for the local council and police and crime commissioner elections.

Canoe invitation

BANBURY: Cherwell Canoe Club is holding an open day at Woodgreen Leisure Centre on Saturday from 10am-4pm.

Club members will be available to pass on advice to visitors who are looking to join.



Munitions factory played a key role in 1914-18 war

Museum to mark centenary of opening of shell-filling facility where 1,500 worked

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

THE British attack on the Hindenburg Line in September 1918 was one of the most significant battles of the First World War.

What is less known is the role a group of men and women from Banbury played in that fight, as workers in one of the country's biggest munitions factories.

When British troops faced a shortage of ammunition in 1915, the government decided to take action and ordered a series of factories to be built across the country.

One of those, the aptly-named National Filling Factory No.9, was built on the outskirts of Banbury, in the fields beyond Overthorpe Road in Grimsbury.

At its peak the shell-filling factory employed about 1,500 people – about a third were women – and produced more than four million shells for the war effort.

This year Banbury Museum is marking the centenary of the factory opening, with events and exhibitions manager Dale Johnston offering more information about the site.

Last year the museum also created an online video with Mr Johnston retelling the history of the factory.

Speaking to the camera he said: "Every day thousands of drivers come along the M40 motorway past Banbury not realising that right next to them was the first World War One munitions factory."

"Building work began in January 1916, and the factory began shell filling on April 25.



Dale Johnston leading the groups down the route of one of the tramways between huts on the No.2 site; above centre, although the wooden huts have gone, the earth blast walls remain along with the short brick and concrete tunnels through which workers would have pushed trolleys of shells

"At the height of the war 7,000 shells were produced each week."

During the early stages of production staff also had a visit from David Lloyd George, who would become prime minister at the end of the war in 1918.

The work was important but also dangerous – the filling hall had its own blast wall, which protected the area around it.

It meant that if there was an explosion all the energy would go up-

wards and only destroy one of the buildings at most.

For a time Banbury was a place for producing chemical weapons, as the government built a second building to the south of the original for making mustard gas shells.

The factory also needed protection from aerial bombardment and, after German Zeppelins reached the east coast of Britain in 1915, anti-aircraft guns were installed.

Women working at the factory re-

ported their skin turning yellow after handling picric acid.

In 1918 the site was mothballed but reopened the following year to break down surplus war munitions.

By the early 1930s the place had been stripped of its machinery and was being used as a training area for the Home Guard. Today parts of the original factory – including ridges and tunnels – are still visible.

For more go to banburymuseum.co.uk.

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Free sports sessions sponsored by housing group

A HOUSING association will be offering young people in the Ruscote and Neithrop areas of Banbury the chance to take part in free sporting activities over the next year.

Activate Banbury will offer a full programme of sport and fitness sessions twice a week over a 40-week period.

It is aimed at residents between 11 and

16 years old and is designed to get young people active and develop a sporting habit.

For the second year running, Sanctuary Housing is funding the project in partnership with Cherwell District Council.

Sanctuary's neighbourhood partnerships manager Kate Winstanley said: "We are delighted to be taking Activate Banbury

forward for another year, allowing us to continue inviting people of all ages to get fit and active."

The programme is part of the association's Love Sport campaign, in partnership with Sport England, which is taking place in four neighbourhoods across the country. To find out more go to sanctuary-housing.co.uk/love-sport

Stars club together to raise hole lot of cash

Celebrities tee-off to raise thousands for cancer care charity

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

FAMOUS faces from the world of comedy and sport got out their clubs to help raise money for a cancer charity.

They took part in the Big 60 Celebrity Golf Day, organised by Bloxham resident Mike Housley, who after being diagnosed with lymphoma two years ago is now in remission.

Stars such as former light heavyweight boxer John Conteh and ex-football manager Lawrie Sanchez were among those who turned out last Wednesday at the Oxfordshire Golf Club near Thame.

Since Mr Housley's diagnosis he has been aiming to raise £60,000 to support cancer care at Oxfordshire hospitals and Action for A-T – ataxia telangiectasia, a rare genetic disease that can lead to severe disabilities from an early age.

A total of £8,000 was raised through the event, which invited teams of golfers to donate money and tackle the course.

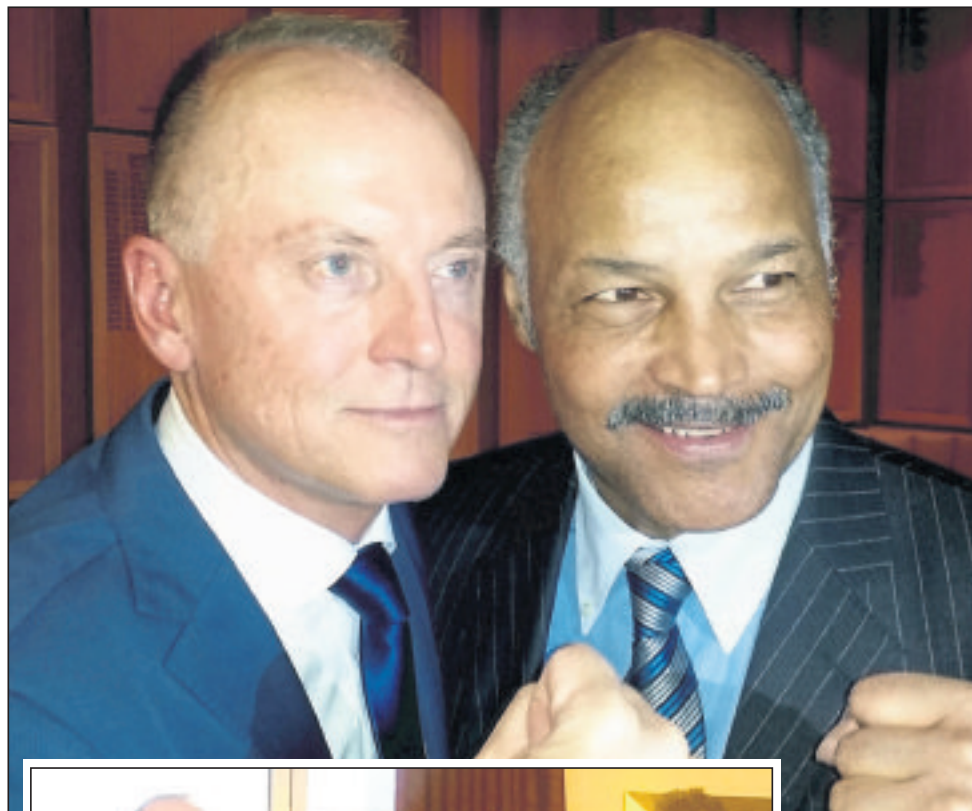
It meant Mr Housley has raised about £43,000 so far – just £17,000 off his target.

He said: "We had some really good weather this year, which we weren't expecting, and it was great to have so many teams."

"Action for A-T is a small charity and it's really important to give them as much funding as we can."

"The cancer care is also a fantastic service that you get from the NHS. They do a great job and for me it's the chance to give something back."

Mr Housley held a golf day last year at Stoke Park in Buckinghamshire, which



Main picture, Mike Housley with John Conteh; above from left, Mike Housley, prize winner Tony Lowe from Deddington, John Conteh and Mark Banfield, from event sponsors Autotask

was hosted by former England rugby international Jeremy Guscott.

In October he held a Halloween Ball in Adderbury.

On June 25 the Banbury Road resident, who founded Bloxham-based marketing agency Cyance in 2007, has organised a 60-mile charity

cycle starting in Deddington. Mr Housley is still looking for more people to take part in the cycle ride.

■ For details visit big60.org

Scales of justice

worth £95.90 from WH Smith in Castle Quay, Banbury, on December 28. Also admitted committing an offence during the operation period of a suspended sentence. Sentenced to a total of four months in prison and ordered to pay a £115 victims' surcharge.

■ Kelly Barrett, 37, of Kings Road, Banbury, admitted assaulting a police sergeant in the execution of his duty in Kings Road, Banbury, on March 29. Discharged conditionally for

six months and ordered to fund a victims' surcharge of £15 and £85 costs.

■ Terri Plumstead, 27, of Alma Road, Banbury, admitted assaulting a woman by beating her in Banbury on February 24. Discharged conditionally for 12 months and ordered to pay a £15 victims' surcharge and £85 costs.

■ Kevin Kewin, 41, of Verney Road, Banbury, admitted producing cannabis, a class B drug, in Banbury on January 4. Discharged conditionally for six months and ordered to fund a £15 victims' surcharge and £85 costs.

Parish councils set to take on more duties

PARISH and town councils are set to take on more responsibilities after Oxfordshire County Council made a new agreement.

Under its "Oxfordshire Together" programme, the county council has been asking smaller councils to take on duties such as grass cutting, weed control, salt bin management, public footpaths, school crossing patrols and annual highway inspections.

It has also asked them to help run libraries and children's centres.

But a report to senior councillors said highways bosses had been unable to enter into agreements for the new duties.

This was because a different section 101 agreement was required under the Local Government Act 1972.

The change of wording was approved at a meeting of the cabinet on Tuesday, April 19.

In a forward to guidance for parish and town councils, county council deputy leader Rodney Rose wrote: "As the size of the public sector is shrinking, we will rely even more on our communities to drive local development and design local solutions."

"In 2015 we launched the initial conversation with communities under the Oxfordshire Together programme, and I was much encouraged to see that a high number of communities have come forward to express an interest in."

"This shows, once again, what vibrant and resourceful communities we have across the county."

Local Tories oppose bid to help refugees

CONSERVATIVE MPs in Oxfordshire fell into line behind the government to oppose a bid to offer sanctuary to 3,000 child refugees from Europe.

In a House of Commons vote on Monday night, Wantage MP and Culture Minister Ed Vaizey, Banbury MP Victoria Prentis and John Howell, MP for Henley, all voted against Lord Dubs' amendment to the Immigration Bill.

Nicola Blackwood, MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, and Prime Minister David Cameron, Witney MP, both missed the vote.

Lord Dubs' amendment would have committed the UK to taking in 3,000 unaccompanied and at-risk children from slum-like refugee camps in Europe.

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A ROUND-UP of cases heard recently at Banbury Magistrates' Court.

■ Ian Ell, 36, of Middleton Road, Banbury, admitted possessing cannabis, a class B drug, in Banbury on March 19. Discharged conditionally for six months and ordered to pay a £15 victims' surcharge and £85 costs.

■ Dean Colling, 32, of no fixed abode, admitted stealing perfume worth £100.50 from a shop in Castle Quay, Banbury, on April 19; stealing DVDs worth £300 from One Stop in Banbury on December 7 and stealing DVDs

Pupils' chance to explore the great outdoors

SCHOOLCHILDREN have been getting back in touch with their wild side through the second year of an initiative to get pupils learning about the outside world.

North Oxfordshire schools will be invited to enjoy the outside surroundings of Warriner Farm School in Bloxham and take part in fun activities away from the classroom.

The 120-acre organic farm was purpose-built as part of The Warriner School.

The farm's leader Bev James will be visiting local schools to show pupils and staff how to make the most of outside space.

She said: "Few children nowadays get the opportunity to play outdoors in the way that we did 30 or 40 years ago."

"Parents have become very risk-averse, which means that important developmental experiences during childhood are missed out on."

The scheme has been created by the Warriner partnership of schools, which consists of nine primary schools in Bloxham and Warriner Secondary School.

The scheme is being supported and funded by Sanctuary Housing through the Sanctuary Group's Community Investment Fund, which supports local community projects.

Pupils will take part in activities including den-building, campfire cooking, knot tying, making mud kitchens and wildlife identification.

Activities will take place every week during the school year, whatever the weather, encouraging children to work on their team building skills.

Jamming event for the over 50s

MUSICIANS aged 50 and over are being asked to find their fiddles or dig out their didgeridoos to join a new music course starting in North Oxfordshire.

The 'Rusty Musicians' social jam sessions are being staged at the Mill Arts Centre in Banbury, starting on Thursday, May 12.

It is part of a Cherwell District Council initiative to create leisure activities for people over 50.

The council's communities, partnerships and recreation manager Nicola Riley said: "If you have an instrument lying around then put the date in your diary."

"These jam sessions aim to be fun, sociable events where you can bring along your own instrument or turn up and use one of our electric, acoustic, or bass guitars, a keyboard, maracas or even an electric drum kit."

"There is no need to book – just come along and jam."

The sessions will run from 1.30pm to 3pm and cost £3.

Music sessions are just one of several over-50s events created by Cherwell District Council including Latin American ballroom classes and an afternoon tea and dance. Call 01295 221803.

Death awareness

BANBURY residents are invited to share some afternoon tea and their thoughts about death and dying at an awareness raising event run by Age UK Oxfordshire.

The free Afternoon Tea and Big Conversation will be held on Thursday, May 12, 2pm-5pm, at the Grimsbury community centre.

The afternoon will include a free tea, advice on wills from town-based solicitors Spratt Endicott, and a session on recording family stories from Banbury Museum.

It is part of Dying Matters week, a campaign to spread the message that it is important to discuss what people want at the end of their lives.

Bard from town... Shakespeare sculptor needs a new home for his creation



Sculptor James Butler with his bronze statue of William Shakespeare, cast at a foundry in Cropredy

A STATUE of Shakespeare cast at an Oxfordshire foundry has not yet found a home after highways managers claimed it could distract drivers in Stratford-upon-Avon.

An application to erect the eight-foot tribute, designed by James Butler, was withdrawn earlier this year after its proposed location was described as "unsuitable on grounds of highway safety".

Mr Butler, 84, has confirmed that his depiction of Shakespeare, cast at a foundry in Cropredy, remained in his yard in Warwickshire.

The sculptor said: "My client was due to set it up where he thought appropriate in Stratford-upon-Avon. I presumed it would be set up for the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death but of course it wasn't, and it's such a pity."

Warwickshire County Council objected to the planned site – on a traffic island in Bridge Street, Stratford – because the busy roundabout leads on to five different roads.

In a letter sent to planners in February the council said: "There is the potential for vehicle conflict due to motorists looking at the statue and not concentrating on the traffic, as well as the potential for pedestrian/vehicle conflicts, should pedestrians step out on to the carriageway and take photographs of the statue."

The planning application was withdrawn on February 24 by businessman Tony Bird, who commissioned the statue.

Shakespeare was born in Stratford in 1564 and the town helped to lead celebrations marking the 400th anniversary of his death.

Making your mark on the political landscape

Party manifestos that hope to sway the public to vote for them in today's election

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

CANDIDATES from across Banbury have been making their final efforts to claim your vote ahead of the local elections today.

It comes as voters prepare to go to the polls to decide their town, district and parish councillors.

In the last few weeks candidates have been campaigning and door-knocking voters to gain support for their party.

Due to ward boundary changes, this year every seat on Banbury Town Council and Cherwell District Council will be up for election.



North Oxfordshire Green Party manifesto launch at Banbury Cross; right, Labour's Sean Woodcock and Conservative Kieran Mallon

Polling stations open at 7am today.

Once the polls close at 10pm, the voting papers will be taken to Banbury's Spiceball Leisure Centre so

they can be verified.

The official count will begin at 10am on Friday, with the results expected later in the day.

There will also be a vote to decide



the next Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley area.

For the local elections there will be candidates from the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green Party and UKIP.

The Conservative Party has already promised to improve safety and more affordable homes, as well as encouraging more businesses to move into Banbury and Bicester town centres.

In Labour's manifesto there were pledges to increase the amount of free car parking available, and to continue their opposition to fracking.

Last week the Green Party also released their manifesto ahead of the elections.

It said that the party would promise to protect NHS services at the Horton Hospital in Banbury, and campaign against the use of Green Belt land for any building projects.

Rise in numbers of sex offences reported to police

THE number of sexual offences reported in Banbury has gone up this year, because people are more confident in reporting crimes.

Figures released last week by Thames Valley Police showed there was a 12.5 per cent rise in all crimes in Cherwell and West Oxfordshire between March 2015 and March 2016, compared to the previous year.

There were 469 incidents of sexual offences reported last year – an increase of 37.9 per cent from the 340 reported during 2014/15.

Cherwell District Council lead member for public protection Tony Ilott said: "The recent figures show many areas where crime has gone



Supt Kath Lowe

down, such as vehicle crime, burglary at home, public disorder and drug possession to name four.

"Last year the method of collecting police data was changed, which has resulted in a spike in some of the figures."

"It seems the general public are more confident in reporting problems to the police, which is a good thing as we need to see the true picture."

"Neither the police nor the district council are complacent and we will continue to work together to make our area as safe as possible to live or work in."

In the county 35,380 crimes were reported during the same period – up eight per cent from 32,774 the previous years.

There were large increases in the

number of sexual offences, harassment and homophobia incidents.

Cherwell and West Oxfordshire local police area commander Supt Kath Lowe said she was pleased to see a reduction in the number of homes being burgled, and the number of vehicle crimes and arson.

She added: "Our task now is to identify ways we can reduce violent crime, targeting problem areas or people."

"We have also seen an increase in reports of sexual offences. People now feel more confident in telling us about these crimes, trusting that we can and will investigate them sensitively and effectively."

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Bravo for Florence and Co

FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS (PG) Comedy/Drama/Musical/Romance. Meryl Streep, Hugh Grant, Simon Helberg, Rebecca Ferguson, Nina Arianda, John Kavanagh, Christian McKay, David Haig. Director: Stephen Frears

AUDITIONS for televised talent shows throw up a limitless supply of deluded wannabes, who refuse to let a lack of musicality or rhythm hamper their quest for pop superstardom.

Occasionally, these loveable misfits strike a chord because of their unfettered enthusiasm – witness the inexorable rise of The Cheeky Girls and Jedward.

Amateur operatic soprano Florence Foster Jenkins was one such endearing eccentric, who became a cause celebre in 1930s and 1940s New York precisely because she was unable to hold a note during her infamous recitals of Verdi, Brahms and Mozart.

Recordings of her caterwauling became collector's items and her concerts were always sold out. Jenkins brought joy to millions and remained convinced of her soaring abilities until her glorious end, aged 76.

This real-life story of triumph against sniggering cynicism provides rich inspiration for Stephen Frears' rollicking comedy drama.

Anchored by tour-de-force performances from Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant that perfectly harmonise humour and pathos, *Florence Foster Jenkins* is an unabashedly joyful period piece that stands resolutely behind the eponymous socialite as she massacres the *Laughing Song* from *Die Fledermaus* or the *Queen Of The Night* aria from *The Magic Flute*.

As the heroine remarks, "People may say I couldn't sing, but no one can say I didn't sing."

Florence (Streep) is determined to further her

musical ambitions with the help of her second husband and doting companion, St Clair (Grant).

The couple audition several accompanists but they fail to meet Florence's exacting standards.

Cosme Moon (Simon Helberg) eventually lands the position of Florence's pianist and his first experience of Florence in full voice is played for tear-streaming belly laughs by Frears.

The grand dame pays Cosme well and he gradually falls under his wealthy employer's spell, acknowledging that she is just following her dream, like everyone else.

Vocal coach Carlo Edwards (David Haig) and venerated conductor Arturo Toscanini (John Kavanagh) prepare Florence for a big concert at the world-famous Carnegie Hall.

However, St Clair worries that the stress of the forthcoming engagement is playing havoc with her faltering health.

Audiences will certainly die happy after watching *Florence Foster Jenkins*.

Streep is mesmerising, bringing tenderness and vulnerability to a role that could so easily have been played as a pitiful figure of mockery.

Grant is a wonderful comic foil and he demonstrates a light touch in moving scenes that remind us of his oft-ignored abilities as a dramatic actor.

Period design is impeccable and Frears builds to a rousing emotional crescendo worthy of one of Jenkins' standing ovations. Bravo!

ROBINSON CRUSOE (PG) Animation/Drama/Comedy. Featuring the voices of Yuri Lowenthal, David Howard, Colin Metzger, Lindsay Torrance, Sandy Fox, Jeff Doucette, Laila Berzins, Doug Stone. Directors: Vincent Kesteloot, Ben Stassen PUBLISHED in 1719, Daniel Defoe's chronicle of a shipwreck



Meryl Streep as Florence and Hugh Grant as St Clair in *Florence Foster Jenkins*; inset, Robinson Crusoe

survivor who lives alone on an island for 28 years, is a beautifully crafted study of solitude, resourcefulness and British imperialism.

The gnawed bones of the book are still visible in Vincent Kesteloot and Ben Stassen's computer-animated retelling, but this Robinson Crusoe is a resolutely child-friendly edition, told from the perspective of birds and animals which befriend the title character during his tropical isolation.

Cuteness and gentle humour trump sophisticated storytelling and harsh realism throughout.

The feathered and furred critters speak to each other and trade one-liners.

CakeWhat's on

We'll Always Have Paris: A Memoir – Trying And Failing To Be French by Emma Beddington is published in hardback by Macmillan, priced £12.99 (e-book £6.49)

WE'LL Always Have Paris is a memoir from journalist and award-winning blogger Emma Beddington. Obsessed with everything French since stumbling upon a copy of French *Elle* as a teenager, Beddington sets about doing all she can to leave her humble Yorkshire roots behind and embrace the French philosophy and way of life. She even eventually fulfils her lifelong dream of living in Paris, but can the reality live up to her expectations? Can it ever? Beddington's memoir is a sumptuous ode to Gallic philosophy, Parisian patisserie and French joie de vivre. But it is also a candid and poignant account of grief, loss, relationships and identity.

The Cauliflower by Nicola Barker is published in hardback by William Heinemann, priced £16.99 (e-book £9.99)

ONLY one thing is for certain when reading Nicola Barker's latest and totally brilliant, yet unclassifiable novel – you have absolutely no idea which direction the story is heading in. *The Cauliflower* is not for those who give up on books easily, but hold tight, you're in for a pretty epic ride. The novel concerns itself with Sri Ramakrishna, a 19th-century Indian mystic, who certainly doesn't like to be referred to as a "guru". The narrative jumps around, though is often told from the point of view of Ramakrishna's nephew. The story unfolds in fragments as the reader gleans half-told tales of magical India. Barker's writing is completely original and insightful and bursting full of spirituality. The novel is thoroughly enjoyable; however the narrative becomes slightly messy at times.

We Go Around In The Night And Are Consumed By Flames by Jules Grant is published in paperback by Myriad Editions, priced £8.99 (e-book £7.12)

STYLISTICALLY similar to Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*, the characters in Jules Grant's debut novel do not only speak in dialect, they narrate in it too. Set in Manchester's seedy crime underworld, *We Go Around...* follows the story of lesbian criminal Donna and her goddaughter Aurora. It's a common case of warring gangs, drugs, gun crime and murder, but uniquely it's presented from a distinctly female gaze, and although it's unflinching in its gritty portrayal of Manchester, there are funny moments and tender passages. Grant's book has its fair share of violence and vengeance, but it's also a heartbreaking and tender read about love and the relationships that tie us together.

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Stores to get defibrillators

DEFIBRILLATORS are due to be installed at up to nine larger Tesco stores in the county, including Banbury, over the coming months.

The supermarket chain is working with national campaign the Arrhythmia Alliance to install 900 defibrillators at larger stores across the UK.

Each of the life-saving electronic devices can be used to shock the heart back to a normal rhythm, potentially stopping a person from going into cardiac arrest.

It is believed all Tesco Superstores, Tesco Metro and Tesco Extra sites will receive a defibrillator, but not the smaller Tesco Express outlets.

A total of nine in Oxfordshire are likely to be fitted with automated external defibrillators (AEDs), which can be used by any member of the public with or without training. An electronic voice will guide the user through each step in the event of an emergency.

Stores in Oxford now in line for a new defibrillator include the Tesco Superstore at Oxford Retail Park and Tesco Metro stores in Cowley Road and Magdalen Street.

Elsewhere stores in Kidlington, Faringdon, Didcot, Abingdon, Banbury and the new superstore in Bicester also qualify for a device.

Trudie Lobban MBE, founder of Arrhythmia Alliance, said: "Sudden cardiac arrest is the nation's number one killer. 100,000 people die each year due to sudden cardiac arrest; this number could be drastically reduced if more public access defibrillators were available in the community.

"An AED is simple to use, no training is required and the machine talks to you telling you exactly what to do.

"You cannot harm anyone by using a defibrillator. However, you can save a life."

Baton twirling gymnasts make the England team

Youngsters will compete in the European cup held in western France in July

Kieran Davey
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TWO young gymnasts from Banbury have been chosen to represent their country in a European competition.

Georgia Williams-Parker, 14, and Aisha Halford, 12, will travel to France in July with the rest of the England squad for the Baton Twirling European Cup.

The girls, both students at Blessed George Napier Catholic School, are members of Banbury Cross Twirlers.

They were chosen after being spotted by selectors at national championships from March 25 to 27 in Crawley.

On hearing they had been selected, Aisha said: "It's so exciting and I'll be training hard between now and July."

Georgia added: "It's such an honour to represent England and I'm thrilled to be picked."

Their coach Nicola Halford said she was thrilled for the girls' success.

It is the first time that girls from



Members of the twirling club, including Aisha Halford, far left, and Georgia Williams-Parker, far right

the club have been chosen for international competition.

The coach added: "The girls have all worked extremely hard, winning lots of trophies over the various stages and having great success at the championships.

"They should be really pleased with their achievements.

"We are very proud of them, both the girls selected and every-

one in the club this year.

"It has been very busy this year, and we have already in competed in four major competitions.

"Congratulations to all of them and good luck to our two girls selected for the Europeans."

The girls qualified for the national championships after coming through regional and then area qualifiers, which were held in Not-

tingham at the end of January.

During the area competition the group entered more than 60 individual events including fancy strut, solo twirl, dance twirl and poise.

On the final day of competition, selectors from the England squad came to watch the gymnasts compete.

Other Banbury twirlers to pick up trophies at the three-day national championships were Abbie Buzzard in the two baton category, Tammi McFadden in the solo twirl, Anya Buzzard, Ella Buzzard, Aliyah King, Iris Duarte and Summer King.

The European Twirling Cup will take place from July 6-10 near La Roche-sur-Yon in western France.

The opening ceremony will be on July 6 with the first events taking place the following day, including the solo and pair preliminaries.

Both girls selected will be taking part in the group competition, with Aisha also taking part in the solo division.

Over the next two months they will be travelling to Luton for training sessions with the national squad.

In twirling, competitors perform gymnastic routines while twirling batons.

The sport also requires fitness, agility, balance and timing.

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Oxfordshire Listings

Events

THURSDAY

Goethe's Vision of Nature: Abbey Chapel, Checker Walk, Abingdon. By Alex Murrell, Head of Physics, Wynstones School, Gloucester. 7.30pm. Suggested contribution £7. 01235 533887.

Just Read!: Larkmead School, Faringdon Road, Abingdon. Larkmead School and Mostly Books invite you to an evening with specialist publisher Barrington Stoke. They will reveal tips, simple strategies and target books that are proven to help support your child and give them the opportunities to become more successful readers. 6.45pm. Free. 01235 525880.

Lampshade Making Workshop: Gluck, 8 London Street, Faringdon. Make a professional quality drum lampshade from fabrics or vintage maps. 10am. £30 including materials. 07974 081526.

Witney Folk Dance Group: Madley Park Hall, Northfield Farm Lane, Witney. 8pm. £3. includes raffle and coffee. 01993 705961.

FRIDAY

Dance and Movement – Over 50 Years: Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. 2pm. £4 per session, pay as you go. 01235 515144.

A Weekend Retreat Built Around an Epic Tale: Braziers Park, Ipsden, Wallingford. With Olivia Olsen, Joan Frazer and Colum Hayward. A weekend immersed in one of the great myths of Britain. This epic story will be told in parts. After each telling the images and events will be shared in conversation, contemplation and guided meditation. 10am. £150 (concessions available).

SATURDAY

Cogges Craft Market: Cogges Manor Farm, Church Lane, Witney. 10am. £1 craft market only. 01993 772602.

Creating a Herbal Medicine Kit for your Home: Braziers Park, Ipsden, Wallingford. 10am. £60.

Dance like Demelza and Ross

Poldark: St John's Church Hall, Opposite Sainsbury's, Kidlington. Enjoy learning, with the Oxford Historical Dance Society, dances from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, which were popular with Ross and Demelza Poldark. No partner or experience needed. For details see www.ohds.org.uk 10.30am.

£25/£20/students £10. 01225 344353.

Didcot & Oxfordshire Toy Fair:

Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot. 10am. £2.50, under 16s free. 07708 385061.

Free dog microchipping:

Countryside Store, Ducklington Lane, Witney. From April 2016 your dog must be microchipped, if not you will be breaking the law and could face a £500 fine. 10am. 07887 475401.

Hailey Local Business Fair: Hailey Village Hall, Middleton, Hailey. A event for all the family with stalls and activities. 11am. Free entry. 07971427726.

Lavender birds: The Mix Community Space, 15 Mill Street, Wantage. Upcycling crafts workshop. 2pm. Free. 07768 767787.

On Parade!: Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock. Challenging workshop for six to 10 year olds. Active games, quizzes, craft, technical challenges and dress up, linked to the collections. 1pm. £6. 01993 810 214.

Plant Sale: Orchard Centre, Central Drive, Didcot. Proceeds in aid of Didcot Twinning Association. 10am. Free. 01235 816602.

Plant Sale: South Leigh Village Hall, Church End, South Leigh. 10am. Free. 01993 703840.

Table Top and Jumble Sale: Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary, Old Didcot

Road Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Wallingford. 11am. Buyers entry 50p. 01491 833938.

SUNDAY

Against Breast Cancer Classic

Oxford Bike Ride 2016: Harwell Campus, Perimeter Road, Harwell. Now in its 11th year this is a fabulous cycling event and opportunity to explore Oxfordshire's countryside. Choose either the 30, 60, 75 or 100 mile route or the family friendly 12-mile great escape ride. 7am. <http://www.againstbreastcancer.org.uk/get-involved>. 01235 534211.

Bats at Wallingford Castle

Meadows: Wallingford Castle Meadows, Cemetery Lane, Wallingford. Join Earth Trust and local expert Dominic Lamb on a walk at dusk to find out more about these winged mammals, including how to recognise different species using a bat detector. Booking essential. www.earthtrust.org.uk/whatson. 8.15pm. £5 adult, £2 child. 01865 407792.

Dawn Chorus Walk: Earth Trust Centre, Little Wittenham. Listen to the birds celebrating the season on the Wittenham Clumps. Learn more about identifying birdsong with Ben Carpenter. Booking essential. 4.30am. £5 adult, £2 child. 01865 407792.

Harwell WI: Harwell Village Hall, High Street, Didcot. Annual plant sale and coffee morning. 10am. Free. 01235 835649.

National Gardens Scheme:

Adderbury. Attractive ironstone village with gardens ranging from quite small to very large. Three gardens. Limited wheelchair access in Placketts. Home-made teas in the Church House (Library), High Street. 2pm. Combined Adult £5, chd free.

North Moreton Village Fete:

Recreation Ground, Bear Lane, North Moreton. Adults £1, children and parking Free. 2pm. 07979 865737.

Walk (Fieldpaths): Leafield, West End. SP315154 11 miles. A walk along Greenwich Lane, parts of Anglo-Saxon boundaries of Witney (969 and 1044) and Roman road. Bring refreshments, lunch at Ramsden pub (if open). Crossing B4022 twice. Dogs on leads. 10am. 01865 514082.

Wallingford Car Rally 2016: The Kinecroft, High Street, Wallingford. Annual event raising money for local charities. 250 vehicle parade and static show. 10.30am. Free but donation buckets on site. 07729 982464.

MONDAY

Mercury in Transit: University Parks, Parks Road, Oxford. A dozen times each century the planet Mercury passes between the Earth and the Sun. Celebrate this astronomical rarity by joining the Museum of the History of Science and Hanwell Community Observatory for a special event in the University Parks, Oxford, as we watch Mercury appear as a tiny dot on the surface of the Sun. This event will take place on the public play area by Keble Gate, University Parks. 12pm. Free. 01865 277280.

TUESDAY

Crocheting toys: No Two Things, 120 Broadway, Didcot. Pattern included but you'll need to buy/bring some DK yarn and size 3mm hook. 7.30pm. £15. 01235 511550.

Launch of Book and of Host

Abingdon: St Nicolas' Church, Market Place, Abingdon. The New Odyssey, the story of Europe's refugee crisis. *Guardian* migration correspondent Patrick Kingsley introduces his new book at the public launch of Host Abingdon, a compassionate local response to refugees and asylum seekers. In association with Mostly Books, Abingdon. 7.30pm. Donation invited. 01865 244146.

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

Natural History Talk: Community Centre, New Road, Woodstock. Barry Oxley 'Otmoor: Past, Present and Future', For The Woodstock Natural History Society. Visitors welcome £2. 7.30pm. Visitors £2. 01993 812004.

Ramblers Walk: Christmas Common, Watlington Hill, NT Car Park, Watlington. Four-mile walk in the Chilterns with a pub stop at the end. Sorry, walk not suitable for dogs. 10am. 01844 215624.

WEDNESDAY

Cotswold Decorative & Fine Arts Society: Bradwell Hall, Bradwell Village, Burford. 'Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783): Landscape, Art and Dame Nature' by Twigs Way. 10.15am. Non-members are welcome, suggested donation £8..

Harwell WI: Harwell Village Hall, High Street, Didcot. Harwell WI's May meeting will discuss this year's resolutions and will be followed with a talk by Paul Jupp entitled 'Gardening and Wild Life'. Visitors are always welcome. 7.30pm. Annual subscription but free for visitors. 01235 835649.

Oxfordshire and the Spanish Civil War: Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock. Liz Woolley illustrates the story of how the people of Oxfordshire responded to the Spanish Civil War. Booking essential. 6.45pm. £10. 01993 810 211.

Oxfordshire Railway Society: Seacourt Day Centre, Seacourt Road, Botley. 'The Life & Times of Isambard Kingdom Brunel', an illustrated talk by Peter Lugg, Permanent Way Engineer. Visitors welcome. 7.30pm. £3.

The Excavations at Westgate, Oxford – the story so far: St Mary's Church, Market Place, Wallingford. Oxford Archaeology's Ben Ford, project director for the excavations at the Greyfriars site under the former Westgate car park and shopping centre, will talk about the excavations carried out in advance of the redevelopment of the site by Westgate Oxford and Laing O'Rourke. 7.45pm. Visitors (£4) are welcome. 01491 836096.

What the World is Losing – Palmyra, City of Palms: Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street, Oxford. Famed for its hauntingly beautiful architectural remains, the ancient city of Palmyra was an oasis and important stop on the caravan route across the Syrian desert. Linda Farrar talks about Palmyra's tombs and archaeological remains and the powerful figure who dominated its history, Queen Zenobia. 2pm. £9/£8 concessions. 01865 305305.

Music

THURSDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Stephen Dale Petit. The Haven Club. 7pm. £10 (£5).

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Less Than Jake. Florida ska-punks. 7pm. £15.

Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon, Checker Walk, Abingdon: Reg Meurooss. Singer songwriter. 7.15pm. £12.

St Barnabas, St Barnabas Street, Jericho, Oxford: Chad Valley , Salvation Bill and After the Thought. 7-11pm. £10 (£8 adv., £6 early bird).

FRIDAY

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley

Road, Oxford: The Spitfires, Nick Corbin (New Street Adventure), Zurich. Indie-punk. 6.30pm £10

The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: Storyteller, Beaver Fuel, Die In Vain, Laima. 8.15pm. £5.

Angel, Market Square, Witney: Uprooted. Male covers duo. Free. 9pm. 01993 703238.

Berinsfield SC, Green Furlong, Berinsfield: Joe Holic. 9pm. 07770 899859.

Cogges, Churh Lane, Witney: Chris Wood. £13 advance / £15 door. 7.30pm. 01993 772602.

Dorchester Abbey, High Street, Dorchester on Thames: Dvorak: *Stabat Mater*. East Oxford Community Choir will be joined by Ensemble Vocal Interlude from Grenoble. £12/£10 concessions/£3 under 18s. 7.30pm. 01865 305305.

Sheldonian Theatre, Broad Street, Oxford: Philharmonia Orchestra. £15-£30. 7.30pm. 01865 244806.

Shush, Regent Mall, Newbury Street, Wantage: The Fab Beatles – Tribute. £10-£12. 8pm. 01235 771122.

The Northcourt (Abingdon Utd FC), 3 Northcourt Road, Abingdon: Emmet Scanlan & What The Good Thought. £10 advance, £12 door. 7.30pm. 01235 856076.

SATURDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Desert Storm, Suns Of Thunder, Welcome Back Delta, 1000 Chains. Rock/metal. 7pm. £5.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Leader, A Way With Words, Dance à la Plage, Stick Figures. EP launch for local rockers. 7pm. £8.50.

The White House, 38 Abingdon Road, Oxford: The Mighty Redox, Des Barkus. All original psycho-eclectic rock band and local bluesman. 8pm. Free.

The Rock of Gibraltar, Enslow Bridge, Blethingdon: Mudslope Morris & the Revelators. 9-11pm. Free.

The Marlborough Club, 227 Broadway, Didcot: Wigwam. 1970's band. 8.45pm. Free.

Tiddy Hall, Shipton Road, Ascott-under-Wychwood: Wizz Jones and support by TRED. Wychwood Folk Club. 8pm. £10 (£8 adv.).

Aston and Cote Village Hall, Cote Road, Aston: Bohem Ragtime Jazzband from Hungary. £12.50 (£15 on door if available). 7.30pm. 01993 850164.

Church of St Peter and St Paul, Church Street, Deddington: Chipping Norton Choral Society sings Bernstein and Chilcott. £12 in advance, £14 on the door, under 14s free. 7.30pm. 01869 338586.

Dorchester Abbey, High Street, Dorchester on Thames: Langtree Sinfonia Spring Concert. £10 adult £5 students under 16s free. 7.30pm.

Royal British Legion, Hadow Road, Marston: Lee Rivers. Free. 8pm. 01865 243991.

Windrush SC, High Street, Witney: Rhythm Street. Four-piece party band. 9pm. 01993 702207.

SUNDAY

Oxford Wine Café, 38 South Parade, Summertown, Oxford: Remi Harris Group (two guitars & bass) Jazz. 6.30-9pm. Free.

The Library Pub, 182 Cowley Road,

Oxford: Rainbow Reservoir, Daskiney 4, The Wimmerin's Institute. Pop-punk. 8pm. Free.

St Nicolas Church, Market Place,

Abingdon: Die Schone Mullerin – Abbey Chamber Concerts. Benjamin Thompson (baritone) and Diana Hinds (piano). £15/£20/£25. 3pm. 07775 904626.

St Peter's Church, High Street, Hook Norton: Banbury Chamber Orchestra Concert. Adults £8, 18's & under are free but need a ticket. 4pm. 07912 888263.

MONDAY

New Theatre, Oxford, 2 George Street, Oxford: Yes. Pioneering prog rock giants. 7.30pm. £44.15.

TUESDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Alvin Roy's Reeds Unlimited. Swing/Mainstream jazz. 8.30pm Free.

St John the Evangelist Church,

Iffley Road, Oxford: Trevor Pinnock and Friends. Trevor Pinnock (harpisichord), Sophie Gent (violin), Matthew Truscott (violin) and Jonathan Manson (viola da gamba). £25, £20, £15 (£5). 7.30pm.

WEDNESDAY

Holywell Music Room, Holywell Street, Oxford: Arve Henriksen - Places Of Worship. Trumpeter and collaborators Eivind Aarset and Jan Bang perform to beautifully evocative live film by video artist Anastasia Isachsen. 7.30pm. £17, £12, (concs)

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Rend Collective, Urban Rescue. Northern Irish Christian folk-rock band. 6.30pm. £18.

Christ Church Cathedral, St Aldate's, Oxford: Pergolesi *Stabat Mater* and Durante *Requiem*. Christ Church Cathedral Choir and Oxford Baroque. £22, £15, £10. 8pm.

Theatre

OXFORD

Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford: May 4-7, *The Fairy Queen*. Henry Purcell's reworking of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 7.30pm. £11.50-£18. May 10-12, *Of Mice and Men*. John Steinbeck's modern classic. 7.30pm. £11.50-£27. 01865 305305.

New Theatre, George Street, Oxford: May 3-7, *American Idiot*. Broadway musical. Various times. £17.90-£46.40 plus £4 transaction fee. May 11-12, Bill Bailey. 8pm. £28.90 plus £2.85 transaction fee. 0844 871 3020.

COUNTY

Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot: May 5, Comedy Club. Topping and Butch, Aidan Goatley and Darren Harriott. 8pm. £12.50, £11 (concs). May 7, *Great Scott!* Antarctica, 1912. Captain Scott and his men perish in their doomed attempt to be the first to reach the South Pole. But what if this isn't what actually happened? 7.30pm £15, £13.50 (concs). 01235 515144.01235 515144.

The Beacon, Portway, Wantage: May 7, *One Million Tiny Plays About Britain*. 7.30pm. £12. 01235 763456.

Chipping Norton Theatre, Spring Street, Chipping Norton: May 5, *One Million Tiny Plays About Britain*. 7.45pm. £14 (£12). May 7, *Stig of the Dump*. 2pm and 6pm, Adults £10, under 26s £8.50. May 12-14, *Fiddler on the Roof*. Chipping Norton Amateur Operatic Society. 7.30pm plus Sat mat 2.30pm. £14. 01608 642350.

Fat Lil's, 64 Corn Street, Witney: May 11, Arnie's Comedy presents A Fundraiser Evening of Stand Up Comedy for LibFest. 8pm. £10. 01993 708805.

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Banbury United's players and staff celebrate promotion on the pitch

Picture: Jon Lewis

Play-off joy for Puritans

Huge crowd roars Ford's men to final victory

A JUBILANT Mike Ford saluted his players after leading Banbury United side to promotion to the Evo-Stik Southern League Premier Division, writes MATTHEW BRUCE.

A crowd of 1,228 – the biggest at the Spencer Stadium since 1994 – turned out to see the Puritans triumph 2-0 at home to Taunton Town in the Division 1 South & West play-off final.

And the Banbury boss believes it is an achievement to be savoured.

"It means a lot to all of us," said Ford.

Banbury United	2
Taunton Town	0

"I said to the players on the pitch that promotions don't come around very often and when they do it should be cherished and enjoyed."

Zac McEachran opened the scoring in the 24th minute, firing home from Felipe Barcelos's cut-back.

Taunton piled on the pressure after the break, but Banbury held on and made the game safe 11 minutes from time, when skipper Andy Gunn flicked in Darius Browne's free-kick.

After exceeding expectations to win promotion, Banbury's manager says he will not sacrifice their attractive style of play in an attempt to survive at a higher level.

He said: "I was told on the opening day of the season after we'd been beaten by Swindon (Supermarine) that you cannot play football in this division."

"We've probably won about 30 games since then. If you've got the right players, of course you can."

Banbury Utd: Harding, White, Hopkins, Stanbridge (Martin 68), Westbrook, Gunn, Bell (Browne 67), Nash, Johnson, Barcelos (Howards 85), McEachran. Subs not used: Wise, Welch-Hayes. Attendance: 1,228.

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ARIES Mar 21-Apr 19

I can see that you feel you have been pressured into things by loved ones, but you still had the opportunity to say no instead of yes. Use this week to work out what you really want from life, as aspects suggest that your dreams are not as far away as you first thought. Compromise is your new best friend. Call now for the low down on life and love.

0906 585 4360

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

A link with foreign names and places adds flavour and interest to your week and you finally start to think outside the box with regards to your career. A new and improved relationship with a younger face also helps you to feel more settled and less stressed. Be ready to act on impulse with your plans this weekend if you want to have fun. Ring now for a long term romantic overview.

0906 585 4366

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20

From this week, you start to look at what is possible instead of what is not. You also work out who has been helping and who has been hindering your career. From Tuesday you make efforts to distance yourself and close the hatches to those who have been acting selfishly. New flirtations have the potential to be something special. Ring now to hear which sign I'd choose for you.

0906 585 4361

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

There is a new and more confident Gemini emerging and you can see from your stars that you no longer feel pressured to do what looks right but instead you are going to be acting and speaking from the heart. A face from the past wants something which it may not be in your best interests to give this weekend. Ring now to hear how Pluto helps you understand mixed messages.

0906 585 4362

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22

There is a new and better group of friends emerging in your life who can help you to get the most fun out of life. Those who have been using you will be easy to see and you start to understand why it is you acted in such a childish and arrogant fashion at the beginning of the month. In fact, you see you could not have acted any differently. Ring now to hear how Venus has the best surprises in store.

0906 585 4363

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22

Several disappointments joined forces to leave you feeling jaded about life but, from Monday, you start to get back on your feet and you see with clarity what needs to be done to right any wrongs. You also discover you have friends in high places as someone you thought didn't even know your name goes out of their way to help you. Ring now. I have a secret I need to share with you.

0906 585 4364

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

You have been led on by false promises but, from this week, you decide you will no longer be treated as a fool. You also make an important decision regarding a family member which they were not capable of making for themselves. Good news regarding tests of some sort is set to end your week on a high. Ring now to hear how Gemini's link to unforgettable times this month.

0906 585 4365

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

It would be worth your while taking some time out of your week to work out how much you can afford to spend, as investments you make and money you lay out may take longer than you thought to show any signs of positive returns. That's not to say they are not worth making, but just to say that patience will be a virtue. Call now to hear how far you can go with your naughty thoughts and behaviour.

0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

Your house of work is well starred and you start to see how many offers you can and should accept in order to make your working world a better place to be. Professional contacts you make midweek can see you planning to visit places which you've never been to before, but which are sure to inspire you. Ring now to hear how it can benefit your career to be on time in the coming days.

0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

Your personal life is under the spotlight and, over the course of the coming days, you start to work out what you really want from a relationship. Your element of earth is making you more stubborn in a family affair than you really need to be and it would be in your long term interests to show more flexibility. Ring now to hear why it's worth returning all phone calls and texts as soon as you can.

0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Jealousy is making it harder for you to forgive and forget than you would like. Try to take some time out to do something which you know relaxes you. It's time to get in touch with who you are and not who others are pushing you to be. Someone thinks that by manipulating you they can pressure you into doing what they want. Ring now so we can ensure that doesn't happen.

0906 585 4370

PISCES Feb 19-Mar 20

Mars could see you encouraging others to do things which will come back on them. Try to make a conscious effort to know how far is too far to go. You could risk losing an important friendship if you don't tidy up your ways. Saturn offers financial opportunity in old friends, but you may have to travel out of your way to ensure this. Ring now so we can talk about recent mixed emotions.

0906 585 4371

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Armed Forces Day Tattoo coup



THE world-famous Royal Artillery Band will top the bill at this year's Armed Forces Day Tattoo in Banbury.

The popular event, previously held in the town centre, is being given a new look for 2016 – and is moving to Spiceball Park to accommodate extra entertainment and attractions.

There will be arena displays, Trooping the Colour, continuity drills, military vehicles, static displays – and a flypast by a Second World War Hurricane fighter plane.

A Chinook helicopter will fly in and be open for inspection all day.

A flight simulator will be a popular attraction and a mini assault course will provide a challenge for 'the fittest' visitors.

Demonstrations by Banbury's Air Training Corps, Army Cadets and Sea Cadets will be part of the arena entertainment.

The appearance of the Royal Artillery Band is a coup for the town. Blackpool also wanted the band on Saturday, June 25, but lost out to Banbury.

Major Jeremy Burnan, Officer Commanding the Banbury-based 142 Vehicle Squadron, said: "Last year's Armed Forces Day in Banbury was hailed as one of the most spectacular in the country. This year's will be better still."

"We are delighted to join with our community, its cadets and veterans groups, to show what is best about today's Armed Forces



Last year's Armed Forces Day Tattoo in Banbury

– precision, commitment, excellence and pageantry.

"The squadron will again troop the Colour of the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars in a bigger and better venue, thanks to the excellent work of Banbury Town Council.

"Once again, a world-class military band will lead the ceremonies.

"The Band of the Royal Artillery plays regularly at royal events, the Changing of the Guard and at prestigious venues throughout the world. Banbury is up there with them."

Flight Lieutenant Karl Kislav, Officer Commanding 1460 (Banbury) ATC Squadron, said:

"This year's event will focus on the three services showing what they do and the cadet forces will contribute with arena displays.

"There will be recruitment stands for the Royal Air Force and for the Royal Air Force Reserves from RAF Brize Norton. The Chinook and the Hurricane fly-past will be very special."

Ann Sewell, Banbury Town Council's events manager, who is organising the tattoo, said: "This is the third year running that Banbury has attracted one of Britain's top military marching bands.

"Last year we had the wonderful Band of the Irish Guards and in 2014 it was the

Band of the Royal Logistic Corps. Both of those are much sought-after in this country and abroad.

"Banbury's reputation for organising military events must be growing. For the Royal Artillery to choose to come here is a real honour."

The Royal Artillery Band was formed in 1762 and now performs around the world.

In recent years the band has been to New Zealand, America, France, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Africa, Switzerland, China and Russia where it represented Great Britain in the 2011 Moscow Tattoo.

The band is based at Tidworth Garrison in Wiltshire.

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Forthcoming Events:

MAY

Saturday 7th 9.30am - 3.30pm
Spring Old Town Party

JUNE

Sunday 12th 10.30am - 4.30pm
Banbury & District Show

Saturday 25th

Armed Forces Day

JULY

Sunday 3rd 1.00pm - 4.00pm
Bark in the Park

AUGUST

Sunday 21st 10.30am - 4.30pm
Banbury Food Fair

Sunday 21st 10.30am - 4.30pm

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SEPTEMBER

Saturday 3rd 9.30am - 3.30pm
Old Town Summer Party and Street Organ festival

Sunday 11th 10.30am - 12.30pm

Battle of Britain parade and Service

OCTOBER

Sunday 2nd 10.30am - 4.30pm
Banbury Canal Day

NOVEMBER

Sunday 13th 10.00am - 1.00pm
Remembrance Day parade

Sunday 27th 10.00am - 6.00pm
Christmas Lights Festival

DECEMBER

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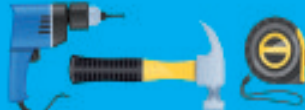
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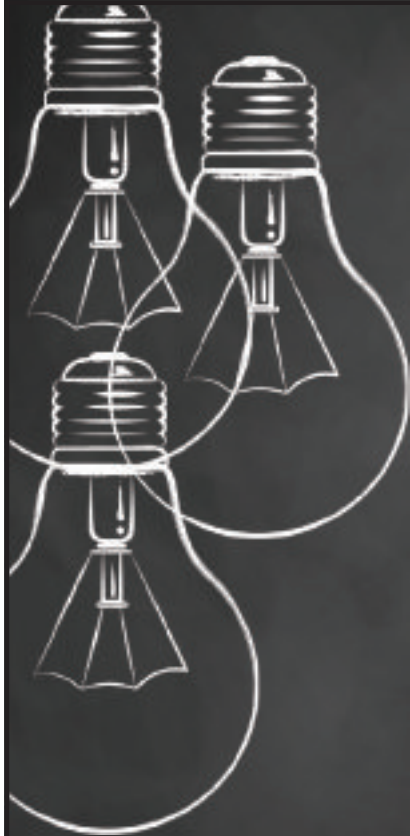
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Ivy Farm House in Murcott; right, Richard Maby of Savills

Restored six-bed home is a pet-friendly farmhouse

ALMOST half all households have a pet, so landlords should make them welcome, a leading agent says.

Richard Maby, head of lettings for Savills, revealed more pet owners are searching for a home.

And he cited a Pet Food Manufacturers' Association report which found a quarter of homes have a dog and one in five are cat owners.

Mr Maby pointed out that the rising cost of property in Oxfordshire has

By Gill Oliver
gill.oliver@nqo.com

pushed more people into renting, changing the profile of the typical tenant.

He said: "We have always had families with children and young professionals as tenants but what it has done has increased the percentage of people entering the private rentals sector – a trend which

is due to continue."

But Mr Maby admitted that for some landlords, this presented a dilemma.

He added: "Historically, landlords have preferred to not accept tenants with pets due to the additional wear and tear and, in extreme cases, the damage they believe pets can cause to a property."

"However, when faced with the choice between accepting a tenant

with a pet over a potential void period, some landlords may be reassured that there are certain steps that can be taken in order to reduce damage to a property, making the proposition of accepting pets more palatable."

Savills suggests using laminate or wooden flooring, rather than carpet.

Tenants with pets have specific clauses added to their tenancy agreements and pay a bigger deposit

to cover any damage caused.

A pet-friendly property available to let in the north Oxfordshire area is Ivy Farm House in Murcott.

The restored and extended farmhouse includes six bedrooms, four bathrooms and four reception rooms.

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40 Queensway

Martin and Co are pleased to present this spacious four bedroom semi-detached house. The property comprises; four bedrooms, large lounge, kitchen, dining room, bathroom, garage and large garden. This property benefits from off road parking to the front of the property and is close to local shops and schools. Ideal for families or sharers, available now.

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62 Kingsway

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market three bedroom detached property with garage; driveway parking and an enclosed garden. The property comprises; kitchen; living room and dining room; three bedrooms; family bathroom with bath and shower. The property also benefits from plenty of storage and fitted wardrobes.

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Causeway

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Marshall Road

Martin & Co are pleased to offer this spacious two bedroom apartment within walking distance to the town centre and train station. The property comprises of living room and kitchen. There are two double bedrooms and a bathroom. The master bedroom has an en-suite bathroom. There is also allocated parking.

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The definitive view
by Andy Enright



Discover the SEAT Ibiza spirit



THE fourth generation version of SEAT's Ibiza has so far been an interesting but often under-rated choice in the supermini segment. This much-improved model gets a thorough refresh of its engines, more equipment and joins the trend for customer personalisation, the changes coming together to create a very complete product. Is it all too late to turn round the fortunes of this MK4 model? It'll be interesting to see....

Background

Supermini-sized cars are hot stuff at the moment. The days when bigger family hatchbacks like the Ford Focus and the Vauxhall Astra topped the sales charts are now well and truly over. We've downsized en masse, drawn to the likes of the Fiesta and the Corsa. But not, it seems, to the Ibiza, a car that until now has been routinely outsold by its bigger sibling, the Leon.

Driving Experience

This is the second update of the Ibiza Mk4, a car originally launched in 2008 and then updated in 2012. Back in '08, it was the first to use the PQ25 chassis that now underpins the Audi A1 and the VW Polo, so it still has a classy set of underpinnings. This time round, SEAT has

had a good look at the engine range. The entry-level 1.0-litre petrol unit is a three-cylinder which produces 75PS in naturally aspirated format and 95PS or 110PS in 'Eco TSI' turbo-charged guise. The four-cylinder 1.4 Eco TSI with active cylinder management (ACT) develops 150PS while its cylinder deactivation under partial load leads to impressive fuel economy. There's also a 1.4 TDI with 75PS and two other TDI powertrains, offering either 90 or 105PS.

Design and Build

Today's Ibiza doesn't look too different from the 2012 car, which in turn wasn't radically changed from Luc Donckerwolke's original. As before, it's available in three body styles - five-door, 'SC' three-door and 'ST' compact estate. SEAT has belatedly jumped onto the personalisation bandwagon and now offers the Ibiza with 'Colour Packs'. 'Bismuth' (an elegant shade of brown) is among them, as is 'Velvet' (a rich purple).

Each Colour Pack comes with a wide range of trim elements in the respective colour. On the outside, the rim of the radiator grille and the door mirror housings are finished in the chosen colour. Inside, the air vent bezels and the detailing on the

steering wheel and gear lever are part of the colour package, as are the coloured stripes set into the seat backrests. One characteristic element is the two-colour 16- or 17 inch alloy wheels. There are a large number of possible combinations between the Ibiza's paint colour and the Colour Pack.

Market and Model

Prices haven't changed very much, whether you're looking at three-door, five-door or estate models. Most models are sold in the £10,000 to £15,000 bracket, so, as before, you're getting Volkswagen Polo technology for a significant saving. Bringing a welcome dose of technology to the Ibiza is sure to help its showroom appeal. The 'MediaSystem plus' and sat nav system can be enhanced with the 'MirrorLink' function, which provides seamless smartphone integration into the car infotainment system. In other words, you see the icons from your Android phone on the infotainment screen in the car. If you're a scion of Steve Jobs (or, to put it another way, if you've got an iPhone), you'll need 'The Full Link' option that'll give you the 'Apple CarPlay' system that does much the same thing as MirrorLink. SEAT also debuts a Tiredness Recognition

System with this Ibiza, plus their Multi-Collision Brake system.

Cost of Ownership

Being able to dip into the Volkswagen Group parts bin for the niftiest tech usually means a very low overall cost of ownership and that's certainly the case here. The four-cylinder 1.4-litre Eco TSI petrol variant with 'ACT' active cylinder management manages a diesel-like 58.9 mpg on the combined cycle and both three and four-cylinder units fulfil all the latest EU6 emissions standards. The entry-level 1.0-litre Eco TSI Ecomotive petrol model delivers a combined fuel economy of 68.9 mpg, which equates to a CO2 figure of 94g/km. Among the three-cylinder diesel engines, the 1.4-litre TDI with 75PS achieves fuel consumption of 83.1 mpg, which equates to an emissions figure of just 88g/km. Each of the other TDI powertrains, with 90 or 105PS, achieve 74.3 mpg or more on the combined cycle. A start/stop system, which switches off the engine when the vehicle is at a standstill, is available across all current SEAT Ibizas.

Summary

It's hard for a car manufacturer to get a mid-life makeover right. If all

the budget goes on improved styling, lots of people take notice, then try the car and find out that essentially, little has changed. If, on the other hand, as SEAT has done here, you concentrate most of your efforts in creating a better, more efficient product without too much unnecessary tinsel, then there's a danger that your work will get overlooked in an increasingly competitive market, something that could certainly happen with this much improved MK4 model Ibiza. Though its underbody changes are sweeping, so modest is this car's exterior update that it's likely that few will pay too much heed.

Facts at a glance

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INSURANCE GROUPS: 8-18
CO2 EMISSIONS: 93-145g/km
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Motors - first for used cars

Used Car Road Test

by Jonathan Crouch



An exceptionally beautiful car



THERE are superminis and then there's Audi's A1, a small car that never seems to be trying too hard. It's stylish without being overly attention-seeking and it's mopped up as huge number of orders since it was launched at the start of 2011. So what if it's built on the comparatively humble underpinnings of a VW Polo? It wasn't really an issue. What was a good car at launch became even better with Sportback five-door models and some super-economical engines. Here's what to look for when buying used.

The History

Audi likes to underscore its record of innovation but the company owes a big debt of gratitude to its rivals from Bavaria, BMW, who showed with the MINI range that consumers were prepared to pay a sizeable premium for an upmarket citycar. Audi will doubtless point to their aluminium A2 which appeared a couple of years before the MINI, but this was a car that never attained genuine traction with the car buying public. Audi

took another bite with the A1 in 2010 and this has cemented a reputation as the most polished small car on sale.

Back in 2010, the Ingolstadt brand was only just getting started though. The range launched with a choice of a 1.2-litre TFSI petrol unit good for 86PS, or alternatively a 1.4-litre TFSI engine with 122PS and the option of an S tronic win-clutch transmission. The sole diesel powerplant was a 1.6-litre TDI diesel which cranked out 105PS. So far, so unexciting.

Things got much brighter when the 185PS version of the 1.4 TFSI was announced, four months later, and Audi predictably nailed down a five-star Euro NCAP test score at the end of 2010, while in June 2011, the brand launched an even cleaner version of the 1.6-litre diesel, dropping emissions to 99g/km and lifting combined economy to 74.3mpg.

At the end of 2011, the marque introduced Black Edition and Contrast Edition specials and used this launch as an opportunity to usher in a more powerful 2.0-litre

143PS TDI diesel engine that complemented the existing 1.6-litre, 105PS unit. Almost immediately thereafter, the five-door Sportback version of the A1 was unveiled. The last act of 2011 for Audi was to announce the ballistic 256PS A1 quattro special, with a 333 car product run and a £41,000 price tag. Only 19 came to the UK.

Fast forward to March 2013 and Audi fitted DAB stereos to A1 models, while in June, Audi launched an A1 S line Style Edition, available in red, silver or black. In the Spring of 2014, the hot hatch turbocharged S1 variant made its debut. A revised Audi A1 range was announced at the end of 2014 for the 2015 model year.

What To Look For

Unlike most other superminis, Audi A1's tend not to have been abused as business hacks, and many are in very good condition. This only makes the rare neglected one stand out even more, so you can afford to be fussy when inspecting. Check the car's specification care-

fully, as some of the more desirable features weren't standard on lower spec cars. Check that the servicing has been done on the button. On the whole, it's a solid and dependable vehicle. We'd look for a low-mileage 1.4TFSI 185 or an early diesel that had led an easy life.

On The Road

There's not a lot that's particularly novel about the A1's underpinnings, the chassis being shared with the latest generation Volkswagen Polo. That means tried and tested strut suspension up front and a compact torsion beam arrangement at the back. Ride quality is firm and there's not the effervescence of a MINI, but available cornering grip is augmented by a clever stability control system as well as an electronic limited slip differential. Aside from the rare S1 quattro, the standout driver's car in the range is the 185PS 1.4-litre TFSI model. The Top Trump statistics here are a 0-60 sprint of 6.9 seconds and a top speed of 141mph and no small car makes going that quick so easy. That's

because drive is deployed to the front wheels via a remarkable S-tronic 7-speed twin-clutch sequential gearbox. What's more, there's meaningful go across a broad rev range thanks to a supercharger that serves up instant low-down torque and a turbocharger that takes up the baton after 2400rpm and gives the mid-range some excitement. It's not the most exciting sounding powerplant but you'll forgive it for its sheer verve. It was good enough to walk the 2009 Engine of The Year award at any rate.

Overall

The Audi A1 started out a bit underwhelming and then just got better and better. The 185PS 1.4 TFSI engine is an absolute peach, but the 2.0-litre diesel gives this small car a lot of lugging power. The interiors are as lovely and hardwearing as you'd expect from a car that wears the four rings on its nose and there's a decent amount of used stock to choose from. Value can be found in the special editions, but negotiate hard and you won't be disappointed if you have an eye for the right car.

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2005 05	HONDA JAZZ 1.4 SE CVT (AUTOMATIC). Silver. 5 Doors. Approximately only 41000 recorded miles. Local car 2 owners. Full service history. Only £30.00 per year road tax. Superb condition throughout. PAS. Remote central locking. Aircon. Alloys. Radio/CD. Electric windows and door mirrors. Etc. Sold with a full service a new MOT and a new cambelt. HPI clear.....	£3,595.00
2005 55	VOLKSWAGEN POLO 1.2 S 55. Black. 5 Doors. PAS. Aircon. Radio/CD. Central locking. Electric windows and door mirrors. Very nice small car in lovely condition. Approximately 78000 miles. Local car. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt. HPI Clear.....	£2,795.00
2005 55	VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 LIFE TWINPORT. Metallic Dark Grey. 5 Door. Local car. Lovely condition. Good service record. PAS. Remote central locking. Radio/CD. Electric windows and mirrors. Air-conditioning. Sold with a new MOT a new cambelt kit and a full service. HPI clear.....	£2,650.00
2005 54	TOYOTA COROLLA T3 VVTi. Red. 5 doors. Local car previously supplied by ourselves. PAS. Aircon. Alloys. Electric windows and mirrors. Remote central locking. Excellent service history. Lovely throughout. Car was fully serviced by ourselves less than 1000 miles ago. Sold with a new MOT. HPI Clear.....	£2,550.00
2005 05	NISSAN MICRA 1.2S, metallic blue, 5 door hatchback, 2 owners, local car, PAS, electric windows, remote central locking, cd/player, etc, very nice condition, drives very well, Sold with a new MOT, a full service, and a new cambelt kit, HPI clear.....	£2,350.00
2005 54	ALFA ROMEO 156 JTS Veloce 2.0. Silver Metallic. Black leather interior. Very nice condition throughout. Local car. Alloys. Air con. PAS. Radio/CD. Remote central locking. Electric windows Etc. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt kit. HPI clear.....	£2,195.00
2002 51	FORD MONDEO ZETEC 2.0 TDCi, 5 door hatchback, metallic blue, local car in very nice condition throughout, PAS, alloys, aircon, remote central locking, electric windows and doors and mirrors, radio/cd, very nice example of this popular large diesel car. Sold with a new MOT, a full service, and a new cambelt kit, HPI clear.....	£1,995.00
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Motors - first for new cars

New Car Launch Model Of The Week

by Jonathan Crouch



Open up new experiences, discover the city



THE smart fortwo has always been a quirky choice, but one that has its own cult following. As with previous generations, a cabriolet version is available for city dwellers who want to go topless.

Ten Second Review

The third generation smart fortwo has answered many of the criticisms of the first two models. While many would still prefer a four seater (there's the forfour model for that), you could argue an open-topped version of the fortwo makes more sense. Could this be the cheapest new cabrio currently available?

Background

Since 1998, smart has offered what has become known as the fortwo, a two-seat city car with a rear-mounted engine. Famous for being able to park nose on to a curb legally, this model has something of a cult following. While the first generation was pretty awful to drive and the second still blighted by a clunky semi-auto gearbox, the third generation car offers a much more enjoyable driving experience.

Driving Experience

Compared to its predecessors, the latest fortwo is something of a revelation to drive. Gone is the gearbox's

hesitancy, meaning you no longer look (and feel) like a nodding dog as you accelerate. The manual gearbox is nothing special but its light, easy to use and no longer a source of constant frustration. Coupled with the 71PS version of the normally aspirated three-cylinder engine, its fine around town, although the car runs out of puff easily on the open road. 0-62 takes an agonising 14.9 seconds, while hills will often require a down change or two, especially at speed.

Design and Build

At the core of the fortwo cabrio is the 'tridion' safety cell made of high strength steel. The visible area of this cell has been re-profiled for a sportier look. This provides the smart with good crash protection despite its diminutive size. There's also additional underbody reinforcement to help with the removal of the roof. Speaking of the roof, the 'tritop' soft top can be opened like a giant sunroof at any speed. For the full open air experience, you can remove the remaining roof bars and stow them in the boot, something rivals such as the Fiat 500C can't offer. Despite the opening roof, the rear screen is made of glass and is heated.

Inside is the same funky interior we've come to expect from the regu-

lar fortwo. This means a fabric topped dashboard that, like the rest of the interior, can be had in a variety of colours.

Market and Model

On top of the pair of three cylinder engines smart is offering, there's also three trim levels to consider as well: passion, prime and proxy. While the hard-top starts at just shy of £11,000, we'd expect to add at least £1,500 to that figure to get this cabrio variant. Going for the pokier 90PS turbo engine requires a premium of around £600, while the auto 'box is nearly £1,000 more. Add the touchscreen infotainment system, heated seats and a few other trinkets and you'll be looking at over £16,000.

All smarts come with alloy wheels, daytime running lights, a multi-function leather steering wheel, climate control and a stop start system. The 'prime' trim level adds funkier wheels, heated seats and a panoramic roof while 'proxy' models get lowered suspension, sportier wheels plus a distinctive white and blue interior colour scheme. On top of the usual airbags and electronic helpers, there's a crosswind assist, brake assist, hill start assist, forward collision warning and a tyre pressure monitoring system.

Cost of Ownership

This is an area where the smart should excel, so it's a bit of a surprise to see that both manual and auto versions of the 71PS engine only manage CO2 emissions of 99g/km. The 90PS engine also manages 99g/km, although this drops to 97g/km if you opt for the auto 'box. Although those figures will mean free tax, you would expect them to be even lower. Fuel economy is promised to be good if not exceptional; 65.7mpg on the combined cycle for all variants apart from the 90PS auto. For that combination, consumption is reduced to 67.3mpg.

The smart is a bit of a niche vehicle, so resale may not be too bad if you don't go crazy with the options. The warranty is also better than many; it may only be for three years but at least its unlimited mileage.

Summary

The smart fortwo is always going to be an off the wall choice thanks to a relatively high price and the fact it's only a two-seater. It should also be said that although it's much improved compared to its predecessors, the fortwo is still a car that is most comfortable around town. The 71PS model especially can struggle at motorway speeds, particularly if you have to go up a reasonably steep

hill. Look at it as a cheap convertible however and you can start to see more of an appeal.

The removable roof rails make for a truly open vehicle as opposed to something with a big sunroof, while the interior is an enjoyable place to be if you look past the odd bit of cheap plastic.

Considering how much better it is to drive, this car could make an interesting alternative to a regular cabrio.

Facts at a glance

CAR: smart fortwo cabrio
PRICES: £12,500+ (estimated)
INSURANCE GROUPS: 8E/9E
CO2 EMISSIONS:
 99g/km to 102g/km
PERFORMANCE:
 [90PS] 0-62mph 10.8s, 96mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION:
 [Manual] 65.7mpg
STANDARD SAFETY FEATURES:
 Airbags, ABS, traction control,
 stability control
WILL IT FIT IN YOUR GARAGE?:
 Length/Width/Height
 2695/1663/1555mm
WHO TO SEE:
<http://uk.smart.com>

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